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In a synopsis of the rice rats (Oryzomys) of the United States and Mexico, Merriam (*Proceedings of the Washington Academy of Sciences*, Vol. III, pp. 273–295) adds twenty-two new species and subspecies to the thirteen already known.

Phoronis pacifica, a new species described by H. B. Torrey (*Biological Bulletin*, Vol. II, pp. 283–288), is interesting as the first of this almost cosmopolitan genus to be taken on our west coast.

BOTANY.

Plant Life of Alabama.[1] — For nearly forty years the late Dr. Mohr gave close attention to the flora of his adopted home, Alabama; and the later years of his life were devoted to the preparation of a book embodying the results of his long study. He lived to see the last proof sheets corrected, but the date of its publication is a fortnight later than that of his death. A historical account of the botanical work done in Alabama, a detailed study of its physiography, geology, and meteorology, and a discussion of the general principles of plant distribution, lead to an analysis of the features marking the Alabama flora, which, more than any other North American work, exemplifies the trend of modern ecological study in a varied region; and the book closes with an annotated systematic catalogue of the spontaneous plants, including descriptions of new or critical species, a discussion of the relations of the flora to agriculture, and a list of plants known to be cultivated in the state. Considering Dr. Mohr's advanced age, it is remarkable that he should have adapted himself to the current trend of American botanists in regard to nomenclature, but in this, as in his grasp of the newer field problems in botany, he shows a plasticity far out of the ordinary run, and his work, which is of lasting value, is likely to produce nowhere the impression that a younger man, if possessed of his knowledge, could have done it better.

W. T.

Notes. — The varied and far-reaching character of the botanical work being done under the geological and natural history survey of Minnesota is shown by part 5 of the current series of *Minnesota*

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[1] Mohr, Charles. Plant Life of Alabama, *Contr. U. S. Nat. Herb.*, vol. vi. 921 pp., with several plates. Washington, Government Printing Office, 1901.

Botanical Studies, bearing date July 20, which contains: A preliminary list of Minnesota Uredineæ, by E. M. Freeman, A new species of Alaria, by De Alton Saunders, A preliminary list of Minnesota Xylariaceæ, by F. K. Butters, A contribution to the knowledge of the flora of the Red River valley in Minnesota, by W. A. Wheeler, Observations on *Gigartina exasperata*, by H. B. Humphrey, Observations on the algæ of the St. Paul city water, by M. G. Fanning, Notes on some plants of Isle Royale, by W. A. Wheeler, Revegetation of Trestle Island, by D. Lange, Violet rusts of North America, by J. C. Arthur and E. W. D. Holway, and Observations on the embryogeny of Nelumbo, by H. L. Lyon. The number is unusually well illustrated.

Of interest to botanists, as well as ornithologists, is a pleasantly written account, by Dr. O. Widmann, of a visit to Audubon's birthplace, separately printed from *The Auk* of April.

Mr. Massee continues his redescriptions of Berkeley's types of fungi in No. 243 of the *Journal of the Linnean Society*.

Science of July 26 reprints from the London *Times* an article on the recent report of a committee appointed for the investigation of the botanical work carried on at Kew and South Kensington.

A biographic sketch of the late Prof. T. C. Porter, with portrait, appears in the July number of the *Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club*.

The flora of the Palouse region of Washington is the subject of a paper by Piper and Beattie, published in May by the Agricultural College of that state. It contains descriptions of all of the Spermatophytes and Pteridophytes known to grow wild within 35 kilometers of the town of Pullman, and is provided with keys to the families, genera, and species. In nomenclature, the Kew and Berlin rules have been followed.

A recent number of the *Gardeners' Chronicle* contains a figure, copied in the *Revue Horticole* of July 16, showing an Abyssinian landscape characterized by arboreous species of lobelia, which is as striking as the yucca, cactus, and other bizarre landscapes of arid regions on the American continent.

Mr. J. Medley Wood's *Natal Plants*, figuring and describing some of the more interesting constituents of a most interesting flora, has reached part 2 of the third volume.

The first part of Vol. V of the *Flora Capensis*, edited by Sir W. T. Thiselton-Dyer, extending from the Acanthaceæ to Clerodendron in the Verbenaceæ, has recently appeared from the press of Lovell Reeve & Co., of London, — unfortunately without indication of the date of issue.

An interesting essay on palms and their value to residents of tropical countries, by Professor Schröter of Zürich, constitutes the last *Neujahrsblatt of the Naturforschende Gesellschaft* of that city.

In connection with a monograph of garden beans recently published from the Missouri Botanical Garden, a paper by Professor Halsted on bean diseases and their remedies, constituting *Bulletin 151* of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, becomes of double interest. Like all of Professor Halsted's papers, it is well done.

PETROGRAPHY.

Origin of Corundum. — The interesting problem relative to the origin of corundum in basic rocks has been attacked by Pratt[1] through the study of slags. He finds that the separation of corundum from magmas is dependent upon the composition of the magma, upon the character of the oxides dissolved in it, and upon the quantity of alumina present.

When the magma is a calcium-sodium silicate, corundum separates only when the ratio of Al_2O_3 to the other bases exceeds 1 : 1, and the ratio of SiO_2 is less than 6. If Mg and Fe are present, no corundum will form unless there is more than enough Al_2O_3 present to unite with these bases.

When the magma is a magnesium silicate without excess of Mg, all the Al_2O_3 will separate. If Mg is in excess, some of the Al_2O_3 will unite with this, forming spinel, and the remainder will separate. When Cr_2O_3 is present and only a little Al_2O_3 and MgO, these unite with the Cr_2O_3, yielding chromite. No corundum is formed.

When alkalies or alkaline earths are present, the Al_2O_3 tends to unite with these in the formation of feldspars. There is, however, little tendency to the formation of Mg-Al silicates when the magma is a magnesium silicate.

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[1] *Amer. Journ. Sci.* (1899), p. 277.